

**DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION**

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**AGENDA ITEM #12**

March 10, 2000

To: Delta Protection Commission

From: Margit Aramburu, Executive Director

Subject: Update on Strategic Planning Meeting: February 24, 2000

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**Meeting Facilitator: Dale Flowers, Dale Flowers Associates.**

**Discussion by Commissioners:**

The meeting was open by Chairman McCarty and Commissioner McGowan. Each Commissioner was asked to describe each Commissioners perception of the Commission, the Commission's mission, and if and how the Commission has been carrying out its responsibilities (see attached meeting notes).

The Commissioners highlighted:

- The need to be more assertive and proactive in its activities
- A possible shift from role as planners to being advocates in implementing the Commission's Plan in order to achieve balance in Delta land uses.
- The need to be more powerful and influential.

Mr. Flowers then asked the Commissioners to identify issues/opportunities to move into a more assertive role in the balancing act between the three Delta land uses.

The Commissioners highlighted:

- Facilitating solutions.
- Development of a strategy for addressing external influences
- Seek balance between the three Delta land uses
- Enhance public information on Commission positions and actions and increase outreach
- Develop more defined standards and policies, and use them in project evaluation

**Development of Next Step:**

The Commissioners suggested the full Commission discuss the outcome of the Strategic Planning meeting, and develop a strategy for implementing outcomes of the meeting.

**Public Comments.**

Three members of the public attended and added their input and ideas. They generally supported the comments of the Commissioners.

**Draft Minutes**  
**DPC Strategic Planning Meeting**  
**February 24, 2000**

The Delta Protection Commission Strategic Planning meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. by Chairman Pat McCarty. Commissioners present were: Chairman McCarty; Vice Chair Mello; Commissioners Brean, Cabaldon (6:50 p.m.) Coglianesse, Harris, McGowan, Matthews, Sanders, and Shaffer. Commissioners absent were: Broddrick, Calone, Canciamilla, Curry, Ferreira, Gutierrez, Nottoli, Salmon, and Thomson.

Chairman McCarty said that the Commission's mission under its legislation is to protect the Primary Zone of the Delta and to protect and enhance agriculture, recreation, and wildlife habitat. The Commission now needs to look at how to do carry out its mission in light of a changed environment since the Commission's establishment.

Commissioner McGowan, Chairman of the Strategic Planning Subcommittee, thanked the Commissioners for attending. He said the Commission is required to do strategic planning because of its extension to 2010. He said the Commission needs to determine why it is here, what its mission is, what it is doing to carry out its mission, and how to carry out the mandates laid out in the legislation. The Commission enjoys a special role in that it is the only entity that is in place solely to protect the Delta, and it has historically been a forum where everyone can come together to share ideas and issues.

Facilitator Dale Flowers said that every once in a while, it's good to sit down and evaluate if change is needed. The purpose of strategic planning is to determine how we are doing, and where we need to go. The process focuses on conduct assessment (internal and external – i.e., how we perceive ourselves, and how others perceive us) and vision articulation. He asked each Commissioner to answer the first question: Where are we now/What role does the Commission play?

Vice Chair Mello said that originally, the Commission was established to come up with a regional plan, consider appeals from local governments, and monitor land use changes. The Commission has completed its regional plan, and there haven't been any appeals to the Commission of local government actions; therefore, the Commission has been operating as a buffer/conduit of information to the public. The Commission needs to continue to work with other agencies to maintain balance between the "three legs of the stool" (agriculture, wildlife habitat, and recreation).

Chairman McCarty said the Commission's job has been easy so far, but the Commission is now facing new challenges; there are continuing pressures from population growth, water development, environmental restoration, and recreation, and these competing interests are becoming more alienated and more powerful. Currently, the Commission has taken a broad-brush approach to its responsibilities; it now needs to become more refined. He said it's important to be prepared for the future by refining the plan and the Commission's positions.

Commissioner Sanders said the Commission has earned itself a life it didn't originally expect, and with the way the legislation's written, there is a lot of potential to define what DPC can do; there are few restrictions. Regarding the legislation, there is no overall plan for the future; the Commission has the ability and the authority to run the gamut from a clearinghouse role to a mediator/broker.

Commissioner Coglianese said she values the Commission as a source of information and also values the high quality of thoughtful dialogue that occurs. She said the Commission serves as a community forum, and there is good will among the membership represented. She sees the Commission as an entity looking out for the three competing land uses, and how to balance them. She said the Commission has been tracking changes in land use, and needs to develop that information.

Commissioner Brean said he views the Commission as an unusual group with diverse perspectives, looking to understand the issues. He sees the Commission as a forum, where issues such as upstream influences, CALFED, and population growth come together at one central point. He went on to say that the discussion of these issues is a good exercise, but now the Commission needs to define what it has to do to carry out its goals, and take action.

Commissioner Harris said DPC tracks proposed changes in Delta land use, and serves as an information center. However, DPC has no real teeth, it is only advisory for State and federal projects. He added that DPC is the caretaker of the entire Delta, and as such, needs to be concerned about the loss of Delta water to other users. He said DPC needs to be vigilant in defending Delta water supply, regarding how, when, and how much water will be taken.

Commissioner Shaffer said he views DPC as fledgling voice for the Delta, and said it needs to figure out how to use that voice to articulate Delta issues. He added that DPC is strong in the context of CALFED (it holds a place at the Policy Group table as a member agency), which says a lot about DPC as an entity which must be listened to. He said the Commission must work to maintain its collective voice.

Commissioner McGowan said the Commission is at a crossroads – it has completed the plan, and is starting to establish a voice. Commissioners have been successful at listening to and respecting all opinions stated at the meetings over the years, and they've been successful at consensus-building and conserving what the Delta is now. DPC now needs to balance the three legs of the stool, and be an active voice in achieving/maintaining that balance.

Commissioner Cabaldon noted that the Commission is perhaps too comfortable with its success to date. Although the Commission's plan is balanced, the focus has primarily been on agriculture (e.g., how environment and recreation affect agriculture). Discussions have mostly been centered on Reclamation Districts, and local governments' concerns with agricultural conversion. This perceived agricultural focus limits external acceptance among other entities. Internally, the Commission is satisfied with the consensus it's been able to achieve, but now it needs to discuss more issues and achieve consensus on these, as well.

Commissioner Matthews agreed that discussion has been mostly about agriculture, and that the Commission now needs to better address wildlife habitat and recreation. The Commission's objective should be to establish a better collective voice for all three legs of the stool. She said it's convenient and efficient for the public to talk to a number of different agencies in one forum.

Commissioner McGowan conceded that there has been a certain overlay of agricultural land protection; while agriculture is not necessarily the "longer" leg of the stool, it is the "thicker" leg. He voiced concern with the external perception of DPC being focused mainly on farmers and farming in its implementation of the Plan. He said it's all right to decide to hold agriculture

as the thicker leg of the stool since agriculture is the land use that is being converted. DPC needs to protect the legitimacy of its voice, and look at what it is now, where it wants to go, and what it really stands for.

Chairman McCarty said he shares Commissioner Cabaldon's concerns that DPC has been agriculture-bent. He said that if anything has been neglected in this process, it has been recreation, although DPC has tried to address this leg. The Commission needs to ask itself how well it is balancing the three land uses.

Dale Flowers summarized:

- be more assertive and proactive in its activities.
- possible shift from Commissioners' roles as planners to being advocates in implementing the Commission's plan to achieve balance.
- be more powerful and influential.

Commissioner Coglianese said that DPC will be "ground zero" for CALFED.

Commissioner Sanders said that when the Commission was established in 1993, there was no CALFED. The findings in the Delta Protection Act outlined responsibilities for the Commission to carry out; the Commission was created to consider more obtuse pressures, and since then, CALFED has come online.

Commissioner McGowan agreed that whereas DPC was established to focus on urban intrusion into the area, it is now primarily concerned with wetland/habitat restoration. DPC needs to evaluate how it feels about that, and has not had that discussion to date.

Commissioner Sanders added that the CALFED process has evidenced a greater need to "balance" the three legs of the stool.

Chairman McCarty opened the meeting to public comments. Jane Wolff said the struggle in the Delta regarding land use and water issues is not heard in the Bay Area. Dennis Nunn said the Commission has no teeth; Cities and Counties have adopted its plan, but what does this mean in terms of actions to preserve and protect Delta land use. Mr. Nunn said the challenge now is CALFED. Ex-Commissioner Bob Potter said he has personal involvement in strategic planning; the process can be important. He added that dissolution of the Commission seemed like a logical conclusion after the adoption of the regional plan and its incorporation into local plans, but then with the rise of CALFED there was a perceived need for DPC to remain in place to track the process. The DPC needs some specific directions on implementing its Plan; this course of action would be its strategic plan. Regarding the maintenance of Delta levees to protect Delta land uses, there is not enough money in the Delta to keep these levees up without participation from other sources. Chairman McCarty closed the public comment period.

Dale Flowers directed Commissioners to identify issues/opportunities to move into a more assertive role in the balancing act between the three Delta land uses. Mr. Flowers said these issues will become goal areas.

Commissioner Shaffer said that self-determination should be a goal area; no farmer opposes habitat, but they want a valid process. The Commission needs to develop this process, and be the keeper of this process. As it stands now, CALFED and its member agencies want to come in and dictate Delta land use and water allocation.

Commissioner McGowan added that in developing and applying a valid process, DPC would compare proposed projects to its adopted Plan.

Vice Chair Mello said that DPC needs to facilitate solutions, for example, the use of conservation easements is a policy, not a process. The DPC needs to advocate appropriate buffer zones, address seepage issues, weeds, endangered species, and impacts to adjoining land uses. DPC needs to encourage landowner-developed solutions.

Commissioner Brean said DPC needs to be proactive in finding balance; the Commission has not sought opportunities for more agriculture; it has just been trying to protect what's already there. DPC has also not sought areas for ecosystem restoration. It needs to fine-tune its focus, and be more proactive.

Commissioner McGowan identified the need to establish standards by which projects can be evaluated against DPC's Plan.

Chairman McCarty said the Commission needs to advocate both preservation and enhancement, and "enhancement" will require action. DPC needs policies and recommendations to use as a yardstick against which it can measure proposals in advance.

Commissioner Cabaldon agreed that the issue for DPC is how to maintain its focus, with a broader view of enhancement, using judgement and a valid process.

Chairman McCarty said that DPC's adopted plan is skeletal, and the Commission needs to add flesh to it, in terms of self-determination and facilitating solutions.

Commissioner Shaffer said that the plan represents a broad brush; DPC needs to add meat to its bones, it's a question of what level of detail. He said DPC may want to produce a video, outlining what its message is; what it wants to tell the world and how it will develop that message.

Commissioner Coglianese said a major issue for DPC is how to keep its seat in the CALFED process regarding governance of that program. Another issue DPC should look at is what lands are in public ownership, and what it means to Delta land use.

Chairman McCarty said that if DPC focuses too much on CALFED, it will be distracted from its overall program and whatever threats may come to the forefront in the future. He said that DPC needs a dynamic process.

Commissioner McGowan agreed that "protecting the Delta" needs to be defined; this will define the Commission's job, and enable it to meet any challenge.

Chairman McCarty said that the Commission's decision-making should include Delta economic considerations.

Vice Chair Mello said there are lots of ideas on how habitat and recreation can be enhanced in the Plan, they just need to be pursued.

Commissioner McGowan said the rise of CALFED has made the Commission halt discussions on these other issues.

Commissioner Sanders added that DPC needs to be careful not to be diverted by one main thrust; it needs to look at why CALFED was created, what its purpose is, and how to work with it.

Commissioner McGowan said DPC can't let CALFED divert it from its own game plan; it needs to define enhancement of habitat for the Delta, and needs to think about integrating habitat and agriculture to achieve a balance.

Dale Flowers summarized what he thought were some of the goal areas coming out of the discussion: Application of Standards/Evaluation; Balance the Three Legs of the Stool; Relate to Threats (external effects, such as CALFED).

Vice Chair Mello added that DPC needs to be solution-oriented.

Commissioner Sanders agreed that DPC needs to come forward with solutions for "win-win" situations, not a "them or us" mentality.

Commissioner Harris said it's important to disseminate information on Delta issues and DPC actions.

Commissioner Cabaldon said DPC needs to build a "Delta ethic," a sense of place, so that people can appreciate and understand what we are doing.

Dale Flowers summarized and listed the following Goal Areas identified during the discussion:

1. Facilitating Solutions
2. Strategy for External Influences
3. Balance Three Legs of Stool
4. Public Information and Outreach
5. Standards/Policies/Evaluation

Commissioner McGowan acknowledged that the Commissioners present had made good progress on identifying how DPC should proceed – DPC needs to amplify its voice on behalf of the Delta, and needs to get back on a game plan.

Commissioner Matthews suggested the DPC work to balance land uses and develop solutions.

Commissioner Cabaldon added that DPC needs to be a force for all three legs of the stool, making it more credible, with bigger constituencies.

Commissioner Mello said DPC needs to be aggressive in order to continue in the CALFED process, and will need legislative support in this.

Chairman McCarty said the discussion has identified good goal areas for the Commission to work on. DPC's Strategic Planning Subcommittee will develop more specific suggestions on what steps need to be taken to achieve its identified goals.

Commissioner Sanders reminded everyone that each Commissioners represents larger organizations, and said DPC needs to look at how it can use those bodies represented to generate a larger voice for Delta issues.

Commissioner Coglianese said the current schedule hasn't allowed discussion of these matters; perhaps extra meetings are needed.

Commissioner Brean suggested the need for a careful look into the future to anticipate what's upcoming.

Executive Director Margit Aramburu said staff will summarize the discussion for the next DPC meeting, to bring everyone up to speed. Chairman McCarty suggested that at each DPC meeting, the Commission could address one goal area, and outline actions, plans, and measures for that goal.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.